

Animal Services Organizational Review

Fairfax County, Virginia

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The Fairfax County Animal Services Division is approaching a crossroads. On the one hand, the Division has achieved a high standard of performance – as evidenced, among other metrics, by the County’s high animal save rate.¹ On the other hand, deep cultural differences and tensions have emerged between Animal Control and Animal Shelter professionals, which have become, at best, a significant distraction – and, at worst, could erode further progress in improving service to the public.

Contributing to the current state of flux, Fairfax County Animal Control Officers (ACOs) have publicly voiced concern over an upcoming change in Virginia State law regarding their law enforcement powers. Fairfax County ACOs are classified as “Special Conservators of the Peace” – or “S-COPs” – under State law. Changes in the law enforcement powers of Commonwealth of Virginia S-COPs statewide could materially affect the role and authority of Fairfax County ACOs, further compounding the challenge of delivering high quality animal services.

To help inform decisions regarding Fairfax County’s approach going forward, the County engaged Public Financial Management, Inc. (PFM) through a competitive selection process to perform an organizational and compensation review of the County Animal Services Division.

As part of this engagement, PFM:

- Evaluated the organizational structure of Animal Services organizations in comparable regional jurisdictions, as well as for high-performing jurisdictions of similar scale across the nation;
- Benchmarked the duties and law enforcement powers of Animal Control Officers in comparable jurisdictions;
- Compared compensation levels of Animal Control and Animal Shelter staff among regional jurisdictions; and
- Identified best practices and operational considerations that may improve coordination and communication between animal shelter and animal control personnel to execute a shared mission effectively.

Findings of the review include:

- There is no “one-size-fits-all” organizational structure for animal services organizations. The organizations surveyed deploy a variety of structural approaches, including: housing animal services in a police department, housing animal services in a non-law enforcement department, contracting for either the animal control or animal shelter function, or splitting the two functions across multiple agencies.

¹ Save rate represents the total live outcomes for cats and dogs divided by total intake over a given time period.

- Most jurisdictions surveyed maintain animal control functions in non-law enforcement agencies, although regionally and in the Commonwealth of Virginia, it is more common for animal services functions to reside in the Police Department.
- Fairfax County Animal Control Officers (ACOs) generally have more expansive police powers than the comparison jurisdictions surveyed, however, multiple jurisdictions within the Commonwealth of Virginia that were not part of the survey group possess a similar degree of law enforcement authority via the Animal Protection Police designation.
- Similarly, ACOs in most jurisdictions surveyed do not carry firearms, though ACOs in 3 of 4 Virginia jurisdictions surveyed (including Fairfax County) do carry firearms.
- Fairfax County represents the only jurisdiction surveyed that sends ACOs to the police academy as part of training.
- Multiple jurisdictions report the use of a second-line supervisor in animal control operations with a career commitment to this service area. In Fairfax County, this would involve creating a “Lieutenant” position between the ACO III and the Police Captain overseeing the Animal Control Division.
- Fairfax County is only one of two jurisdictions surveyed with a wildlife biologist on staff; most jurisdictions surveyed rely on State agencies for deer management.
- Fairfax County ACO wages and retirement benefits compare favorably with other public sector employers in the region.
- All surveyed jurisdictions report that encouraging cross-functional communication and developing an organizational culture of cooperation and collaboration between animal control and animal shelter staff is critical. Toward this end:
 - Other communities maintain organizational structures for animal services that establish clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and functional relationships – often under a unified structure reporting to a single director, or otherwise providing regular, structure mechanisms for coordination.
 - Surveyed jurisdictions report holding regular staffing meetings and creating dispute resolution processes as approaches to foster collaboration between animal control and animal shelter personnel.
 - The communities surveyed also report the use of formalized dispute resolution processes when differences surface on programmatic decisions, such as whether an animal should be euthanized.

Fairfax County Animal Services

In Fairfax County, the Animal Services Division falls within the purview of the Police Department. Animal control and animal shelter functions are both provided by Police Department employees. As currently configured, Animal Control Officers (ACOs) perform animal control functions while a team of animal shelter employees, in close collaboration with a team of volunteers, perform animal intake and care functions. Animal control activities and intake work are coordinated from the same facility located at 4500 West Ox Road. The Animal Services Division also employs a wildlife biologist, whose primary responsibility is deer management.

Over the course of the past decade plus, great strides have been made within the Animal Services Division. Animal Services was placed within the Police Department. In 2014, the County opened a new state-of-the-art animal shelter. With the combination of increased resources, improved managerial oversight, and a new facility, the Animal Services Division performance improved markedly. The number of adoptions increased and the Animal Shelter's save rate rose from 67% in 2004 to nearly 90.0% in 2015.

While significant advancements have been made in improving animal services outcomes, operational concerns persist. Although co-located in the same facility, animal control and animal shelter personnel generally operate in a "siloe" fashion. Moreover, discussions with members of the Animal Services Organizational Structure Study Team highlight a cultural divide between animal control and animal shelter staff. Cross-functional meetings and collaboration are infrequent, and open tension between animal control and animal shelter teams is not uncommon.

A frequent source of tension is the treatment and designation of "high risk" dogs.² ACO's report that their input regarding whether an animal should be subject to euthanasia, because of potential threats to public safety, periodically goes unheeded. Animal shelter personnel dispute this assertion, and contend that a series of criteria – including, but not limited solely to input from ACOs – is considered when determining whether euthanasia is necessary.

There is a concern that the cultural divide between the two principal functions of the Animal Services Division, if not resolved, may slow and erode further organizational progress going forward.

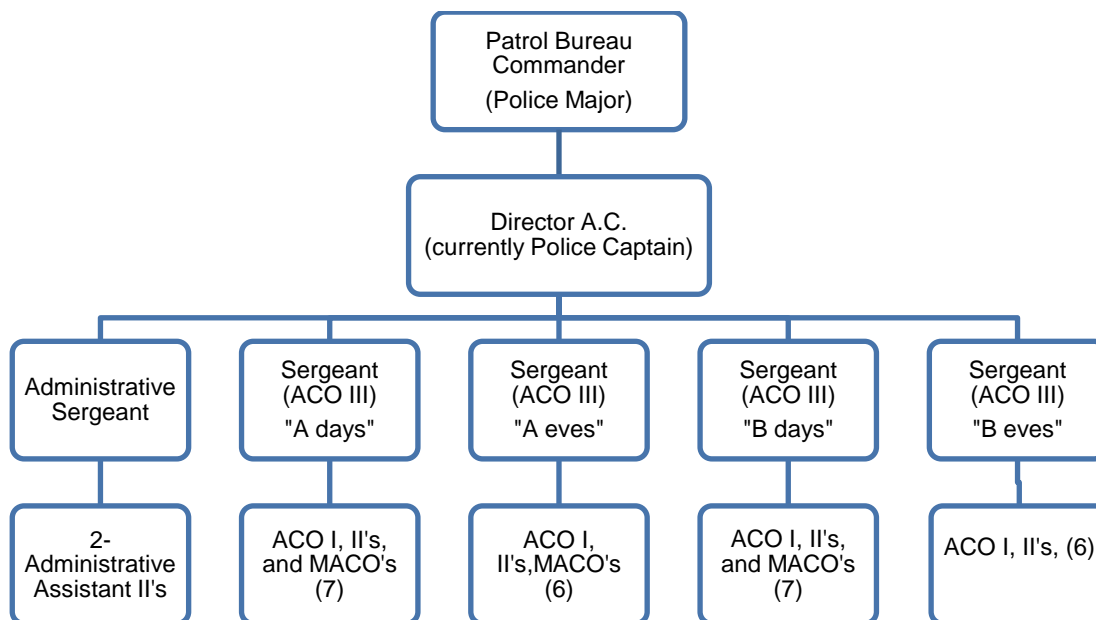
In a concurrent development, ACOs also report uneasiness over a proposed change in Virginia State law regarding their law enforcement powers. Fairfax County ACOs are designated as "Special Conservators of the Peace" or "S-COPs." Effective July 2016, absent any legal changes at the County level, the law enforcement powers of S-COPs are scheduled to be

² The term "high risk" is used throughout this report to denote potentially dangerous or vicious animals that may pose a risk to public safety, and may need to be euthanized. State of Virginia Statutes also contain specific definitions of "dangerous" and "vicious" dogs, however, the term "high risk" used in this report is meant to be used more broadly.

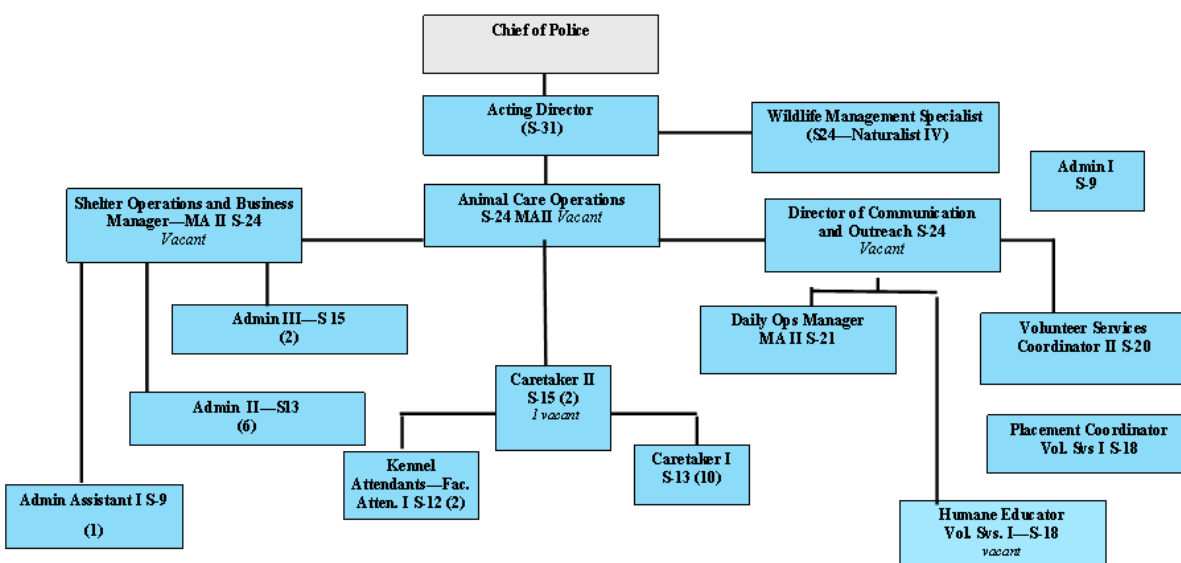
modified. The changes in State law would no longer allow Fairfax County ACOs to enforce all criminal laws, execute search warrants for felony cases, or carry a concealed firearm on-duty (open-carry firearms would be permitted).

In Fairfax County, the Animal Services Division has a parallel reporting structure – a Police Captain oversees the Animal Services Division (reporting to a designee of the Chief) while the Animal Shelter reports directly to the Police Chief. Each organization has its own organization chart with a different chain of command.

Fairfax County Animal Control Organization Chart



Fairfax County Animal Shelter Organization Chart



Organizational Benchmarking

To inform decision-making regarding the future direction of the County's Animal Services Division, PFM benchmarked organizational structures and ACO job functions to a comparison group of 10 jurisdictions – a mix of four regional communities and six national jurisdictions.

The four regional jurisdictions were selected based on their geographical proximity to Fairfax County, as well as similarities in size and scale of operations. The six national jurisdictions were selected primarily based on scale of operations, along with demonstrated strong performance. Additionally, the City of San Antonio was included in the national comparison group despite a significantly higher intake volume than Fairfax County, since the San Antonio Animal Services function recently underwent a nationally recognized reorganization.

For comparison purposes, the save rate – one of the most critical metrics used to gauge the outcomes achieved by an animal services organization – was used as a proxy for organizational performance. Organizations with higher save rates were presumed to be “high performing” organizations, although other factors – such as the amount of resources directed toward animal care priorities, mix of local pet population, and geography may also influence save rate metrics.

Save Rates (Dogs and Cats Only) of Benchmarked Jurisdictions

	Save Rate [1]	Intake
Fairfax County	89.5%	4,127
<i>Regional Jurisdictions</i>		
Prince William County, VA	69.9%	3,651
Loudoun County, VA	72.4%	1,819
Montgomery County, MD [2]	82.9%	2,783
District of Columbia	N/A	N/A
<i>National Jurisdictions</i>		
Alachua County, FL*	85.2%	5,564
Albemarle County, VA	94.4%	3,060
San Antonio [3]**	82.2%	29,727
Multnomah County, OR**	91.1%	5,792
Denver County, CO**	83.8%	6,437
San Francisco County, CA [4]*	84.4%	5,290

*Note: For Virginia jurisdictions, data are from 2015; source is the State Veterinarian's online database. *denotes data are from 2014; source is Maddie's Fund online database. **denotes data from jurisdiction-generated Alisomar reports*

[1] Save Rate: Formula for save rate = (total intake of cats and dogs less cats and dogs euthanized, lost, or died while in care)/total intake of cats and dogs [2] Montgomery County, MD: Figures reflect 6 months of data (3/2014 -9/2014); source is County Council report [3] San Antonio, TX: data represent FY 2015 (Oct. 1, 2014 - Sept. 30, 2015) [4] San Francisco County: Countywide coalition save rates approach 95%; intake exceeds 10,000 animals

In Fairfax County, the animal control and animal shelter functions are located in the Police Department. As noted by Stephen Aronson, author of *Animal Control Management: A New Look at a Public Responsibility*, there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach by jurisdictions to animal control:

A look at organizations known to have responsibilities for animal control services indicates that animal control programs can usually be found in any of seven types of organizations: public safety (police/sheriff), code compliance, public health or environmental health, separate department, intergovernmental entity, humane society or other non-profit animal welfare organization, [and] private operator (13).³

A review of the organizational structures of animal services operations across the comparison group underscores Aronson’s insight about the variety of animal control operational models in place. A successful animal services operation may take many forms – e.g., a stand-alone department, partially contracted out to a third party, a division within a non-law enforcement department, or a division within a police department. Within the comparison group:

- Six of ten jurisdictions surveyed have animal control functions in non-law enforcement agencies, though regionally and in the Commonwealth of Virginia, it is common for animal services functions to reside in the Police Department.
- In Montgomery County, MD, the Animal Services Division is located within the Police Department but the Director and all employees are not sworn-police officers.
- Similarly, in Prince William County, the Animal Services Division is part of the Police Department, but ACOs are not considered law enforcement officers (cannot perform physical arrests, do not carry a firearm, and do not attend the Police Academy).
- In Albemarle County and San Francisco, law enforcement agencies collaborate closely with civilian agencies/organizations.

In eight of the ten jurisdictions surveyed, animal control and animal shelter functions reside within the same department – underscoring the shared mission and importance of collaboration between of the two animal services functions.

Across the national comparison group, however, Albemarle County and San Francisco County represent two examples of high-performing operations where the animal control and animal shelter functions reside within two different organizations and continue to achieve high community-wide save rates.

³ Aronson, Stephen. *Animal Control Management, A New Look at a Public Responsibility*. Purdue University Press: 2010.

Animal Services Organizational Structure

	Animal Control	Animal Shelter
Fairfax County, VA	Police Dept.	
Loudoun County, VA	Animal Services Dept.	
Prince William County, VA	Police Dept.	
District of Columbia [1]	Humane Society	
Montgomery County, MD	Police Dept.	
Alachua County, FL	Public Works Dept.	
Albemarle County, VA [2]	Police Dept.	SPCA
San Antonio	Animal Care Services Dept.	
Multnomah County, OR	Community Services Dept.	
Denver County, CO	Dept. of Environmental Health	
San Francisco County, CA [3]	Dept. of Animal Care & Control + Police Dept.	Dept. of Animal Care & Control + SPCA

[1] District of Columbia: The Humane Society has jurisdiction over animal control functions and operates the District animal shelter through a contract with the Department of Health [2] Albemarle County: the SPCA operates the County animal shelter and coordinates closely with the County and City of Charlottesville law enforcement for animal control functions [3] San Francisco: Animal Care and Control impound and quarantine animals, investigate animal cruelty, respond to emergencies for sick or injured animals. Police Department investigates dog bite cases and enforces animal control laws.

Most jurisdictions within the comparison group reported having a second-line supervisor within the animal control unit. First-line animal control supervisors (e.g., sergeants) will typically handle logistical responsibilities (e.g., scheduling), while the second-line supervisor will assist with some shorter-term logistical efforts, as well as support longer-term logistical coordination, planning, and performance management. Additionally, there is a benefit to having a career animal control officer advise, support, and lead collaborative efforts with senior leadership who often come from civilian or law enforcement backgrounds – and second-line supervisors often provide this valuable interface.

In the general patrol and policing units of the Fairfax County Police Department, it may also be noted that a Police Lieutenant already typically serves as an assistant commander in support of the Police Captain leading each station as commander. Although not a perfect parallel, a similar arrangement using an ACO Lieutenant could be considered for the County's animal control unit to provide additional strategic and coordination support for the Police Captain overseeing animal control, as well as to provide an additional career advancement opportunity currently not available to Fairfax County ACOs.

The table on the following page summarizes jurisdictions that reported the presence of a second-line supervisor in their animal control division.

Animal Control: Second-Line Supervisors

	Second-Line Supervisor?	Title (if applicable)	Notes
Fairfax County	-	N/A	-
Loudoun County	✓	Deputy Chief Animal Control	Deputy Chief reports to Director
Prince William County	✓	Chief Deputy ACO	Chief Deputy ACO reports to Director
District of Columbia	-	N/A	Staffing Complement: 6 ACOs, 3 Investigators, 1 Corporal, 1 Sergeant
Montgomery County	✓	Field Services Manager	Field Services Manager reports to Division Director
Alachua County, FL	No response		
Albemarle County, VA	✓	Lieutenant	-
San Antonio, TX	✓	Operations Manager (Field)	Operations Manager (Field) reports to Assistant Director
Multnomah County, OR	No response		
Denver County, CO	✓	Field Services Manager	Field Services Manager reports to Division Director
San Francisco County, CA	No response		

Additional detail on the structure of animal services operations in the comparison jurisdictions can be found in the appendix of this report, which contains organizational charts for the each of the respondent jurisdictions.

The law enforcement powers of ACOs vary considerably across the comparison group. Among the regional jurisdictions surveyed, Fairfax County is the only jurisdiction where ACOs have the power to enforce all criminal laws, issue summons, make physical arrests (though ACO vehicles are not configured for prisoner transport), and execute search warrants. Under the S-COP designation, Fairfax County ACOs have these powers granted to them through an order signed by a Circuit Court judge.

Within the regional comparison group:

- Fairfax County represents the only jurisdiction where ACOs have the power to enforce all criminal laws, not just laws pertaining to animal welfare and code violations.
- Fairfax County represents the only jurisdiction where ACOs have the power to make physical arrests (though in practice, this power is not exercised in part because vehicles are not equipped for prisoner transport).
- ACOs in all jurisdictions have the power to issue summonses, though in the District of Columbia, summonses cannot be issued from the field.
- ACOs in Fairfax County and Montgomery County have the power to execute search warrants in felony cases; ACOs in the District of Columbia may execute search warrants

in non-felony cases only; ACOs in Prince William County do not execute search warrants.

- Fairfax County represents the only jurisdiction that sends ACOs to the police academy.
- Fairfax County and Loudoun County represent the two jurisdictions surveyed where ACOs carry firearms while on-duty.

As of July 2016, S-COPs in the Commonwealth of Virginia – including Fairfax County ACOs, absent other enabling legislation – will see some of these law enforcement powers curtailed. S-COPs will no longer have the authority enforce all criminal laws, make physical arrests, execute search warrants for felony cases, or carry a concealed weapon while on duty.

In early 2016, the Virginia State Legislature passed separate legislation authorizing Fairfax County to enact “Animal Protection Police” (APP) as a local option. APPs, unlike S-COPs, possess the full law enforcement powers of a county police officer – and their authority does not reside from an order signed by a Circuit Court judge. Because of Fairfax County’s rigorous training requirements, it is believed that most – if not all – current Fairfax County ACOs will qualify as APPs.

Across the entire comparison group (including regional and national jurisdictions) for which information is available:

- Fairfax County is the only jurisdiction where ACOs have the authority to enforce all criminal laws, the power to make physical arrests, and attend the police academy.
- ACOs in some, but not all jurisdictions, possess the power to execute search warrants in non-felony and felony cases.
- ACOs in most jurisdictions do not carry firearms while on-duty, though ACOs in three of four Virginia jurisdictions surveyed (including Fairfax County) do carry firearms while on duty.

The table on the following page contrasts the differences in law enforcement powers/duties in each respondent jurisdiction, including the various scenarios in Fairfax County assuming that ACOs remain S-COPs or become APPs.

Animal Control Officer Functions: DC Regional Jurisdictions

	Fairfax – S-COP (Current)	Fairfax – APP [1]	Fairfax - ACO (7/2016)	Loudoun County, VA	Prince William County, VA	Montgomery County, MD	District of Columbia
Law Enforcement Powers/Duties							
Enforce All Criminal Laws	Determined in Order Signed by Circuit Court Judge	✓	-	-	-	-	-
Issue Summons	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Not from Field; Only from Shelter
Make Physical Arrests	[1]	✓	-	-	-	-	-
Execute Search Warrants	✓	✓	Non-Felony Cases Only	✓	-	✓	Non-Felony Cases Only
Other							
Required to Attend Police Academy	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-
Carry Firearm On Duty	✓	✓	Open-Carry Only	✓	-	-	-

[1] Fairfax County: APP stands for Animal Protection Police; S-COPs have powers to make physical arrests, but do not in practice because vehicles are not configured for prisoner transport

Animal Control Officer Functions: National Jurisdictions⁴

	Fairfax – S-COP (Current)	Fairfax – APP [1]	Fairfax - ACO (7/2016)	Albemarle County, VA	Alachua County, FL	Denver, CO	San Antonio, TX
Law Enforcement Powers/Duties							
Enforce All Criminal Laws	Determined in Order Signed by Circuit Court Judge	✓	-	-	-	-	-
Issue Summons	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Make Physical Arrests	[1]	✓	-	-	-	-	-
Execute Search Warrants	✓	✓	Non-Felony Cases Only	-	✓	-	✓
Other							
Required to Attend Police Academy	✓	✓	-	[2]	-	-	-
Carry Firearm On-Duty	✓	✓	Open-Carry Only	[2]	-	-	-

[1] Fairfax County: APP stands for Animal Protection Police; S-COPs have powers to make physical arrests, but do not in practice because vehicles are not configured for prisoner transport [2] Albemarle County: County ACOs carry firearms but the City of Charlottesville ACO does not. ACOs may attend a portion of the academy

⁴ Alachua County did not respond to requests for interview; information in take from publicly available information

While ACOs within the regional and national comparison group generally do not have the full suite of law enforcement powers available to Fairfax County ACOs, looking more broadly within the Commonwealth of Virginia, it is not uncommon for ACOs to be classified as Animal Protection Police. In Henrico County, for example, ACOs are classified as APPs. Additionally, according to 2012 Virginia Animal Control Association survey, at least five additional Virginia jurisdictions reported classifying ACOs as APPs – Botetourt County, Franklin County, Newport News, Nottoway County, and Wise County.⁵

In addition to animal control and the animal shelter, the Fairfax County Animal Services Division employs a wildlife biologist. Only one other jurisdiction surveyed – Denver County, CO – reported a wildlife biologist on staff (with the Parks Department). Multiple jurisdictions – both within the regional and national comparison groups – reported that State agencies performed deer management and related functions within their jurisdictions.

Wildlife Biologist Functions

	County/City Wildlife Biologist on Staff	Department (if applicable)	Notes
Fairfax County	✓	Police (Animal Services Division)	-
Loudoun County	-	N/A	Defers to State Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries
Prince William County	-	N/A	Defers to State Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries; Animal Services only responds to wildlife calls that are considered public safety threat. County has Wildlife Management Workgroup evaluating the issue
District of Columbia	-	N/A	No comparable function reported
Montgomery County	-	N/A	Uses a contractor in some instances; also defers to State Department of Natural Resources
Alachua County, FL	No response		
Albemarle County, VA	-	N/A	No comparable function reported. Occasionally wildlife cases routed to Waynesboro, which has wildlife biologist on staff (low demand for deer management reported)
San Antonio, TX	-	N/A	State Dept of Parks and Wildlife has jurisdiction over deer management
Multnomah County, OR	No response		
Denver County, CO	✓	Parks Department	Low demand for deer management reported
San Francisco County, CA	No response		

Within Fairfax County, the animal control and animal shelter function have a bifurcated reporting relationship – with the Animal Control Director (Police Captain) and the Animal Shelter Director reporting to different individuals. Among the seven jurisdictions that responded to interview requests, the directors of animal control and animal shelter operations have a unified reporting

⁵ Virginia Animal Control Association Jurisdictional Survey Data 2012, Virginia Animal Control Association. Available online: <http://www.vacaonline.net/Announcements.html>

structure and report to a single individual, reflecting one of several strategies for promoting collaboration between animal control and animal shelter functions:

- Loudoun County, VA: Chief Animal Control Officer and the Shelter Administrator report to the Animal Services Director. Animal Services is a stand-alone department.
- Prince William County, VA: Chief Deputy Animal Care Officer and Animal Shelter Manager report to Animal Services Director within the Police Department.
- District of Columbia: The Humane Society has jurisdiction over animal control functions and operates the District shelter through a contract with the Health Department. Director of Animal Control & Field Services, Director of Humane Law Enforcement (animal cruelty is a separate division) and the Director of Operations (shelter) report to the Chief Operating Officer.
- Montgomery County, MD: Field Services Manager and Shelter Manager report to the Animal Services Division Director in the Police Department.
- Denver, CO: Field Services Manager and Shelter Manager report to Animal Protection Division Director within the Department of Environmental Health.

San Antonio and Albemarle County have different reporting structures based on the scale of operations (San Antonio's intake is approx. 30,000 animals annually vs. approx. 4,000 annually in Fairfax County) and a multi-agency approach to animal services (animal services in Albemarle County are operated by three distinct organizations):

- San Antonio, TX: Animal Care Operations Manager (Shelter) and Animal Care Operations Manager (Field) each report to Assistant Directors. The Assistant Directors, in turn, report to the Animal Care Services Director. Animal Care Services is a stand-alone department.
- Albemarle County, VA: The County Police Department and the City of Charlottesville (one ACO) provide animal control functions, while the County Animal Shelter is run by the SPCA.

The table on the following page provides additional detail on these reporting relationships.

Animal Services Reporting Structures

	Animal Control Director Job Match	Animal Shelter Director Job Match	Reporting Relationship	Department
Fairfax County, VA	Director Animal Control (Police Captain)	Animal Shelter Director	Animal Control – Police Deputy Chief Animal Shelter – Police Chief	Police
Loudoun County, VA	Chief Animal Control Officer	Shelter Administrator	Animal Services Director (Department Head)	Animal Services
Prince William County, VA	Chief Deputy Animal Control Officer	Animal Care Manager	Police Captain	Police
District of Columbia	Director Animal Control & Field Services Director Humane Law Enforcement	Director of Operations	Chief Operating Officer	Humane Society
Montgomery County, MD	Field Services Manager	Shelter Manager	Animal Services Division Director	Police
Albemarle County, VA	County – Lieutenant Charlottesville – (1 officer)	Director of Operations (SPCA)	N/A [1]	Mix
Denver, CO	Field Services Manager	Shelter Manager	Animal Protection Division Director	Environmental Health
San Antonio, TX	Animal Care Operations Manager (Shelter)	Animal Care Operations Manager (Field)	Assistant Animal Care Services Director [2]	Animal Care Services

[1] Albemarle County, VA: Animal Control and Shelter functions performed by separate organizations

[2] San Antonio, TX: Each Animal Care Operations Manager reports to a separate Assistant Director, who each report to the Animal Services Director. The Animal Services Director oversees a stand-alone department

Compensation Comparisons

To evaluate ACO compensation, PFM surveyed a separate group of regional jurisdictions that the County Department of Human Resources uses to benchmark compensation across multiple County job classifications: City of Alexandria, Arlington County, District of Columbia, Loudoun County, Prince George's County, MD, Prince William County, and Montgomery County, MD.

Three of these seven jurisdictions contract for animal control and animal care functions. In the District of Columbia, the Humane Society performs animal control functions and operates the District's animal shelter via a contract with the Health Department. Similarly, in Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, animal control and animal care services are contracted out to the local Animal Welfare League.

Relative to the five jurisdictions surveyed that directly employ animal control officers and animal caretakers, Fairfax County Animal Control Officers (ACOs) receive a competitive compensation and retirement package.

Fairfax County ACOs are hired into the ACO job series as an ACO I. After two years of service, an Animal Control Officer progresses to ACO II. After five years of service, Animal Control Officers are eligible for a competitive lead-non-supervisory title – Master ACO. Officers may also promote to an ACO III (Sergeant), a supervisory position. The table below details the Animal Control Officer career progression, along with salary ranges and headcount for each rank.

Fairfax County Animal Control Officer Career Progression (Headcount as of 11/2015)

Rank	Grade	Entry	Maximum	Headcount
Animal Control Officer I	P-18	\$43,882	\$71,478	2
Animal Control Officer II	P-20	\$48,380	\$78,805	14
Master Animal Control Officer	P-21	\$50,798	\$82,745	7
Animal Control Officer III	P-23	\$56,005	\$91,226	5

At entry, Fairfax County Animal Control Officers earn \$43,883 in base pay, ranking first in the survey group. Fairfax County ACO's are the only animal control officers in the region who attend the police academy. At maximum base + longevity, Fairfax County ranks second in the survey group, 7.9% above the survey group median. Again, the District of Columbia, City of Alexandria, and Arlington County are not included in these comparisons, as they contract for animal control services to nonprofit organizations.

Animal Control Officer Comparisons – Journey Level (as of 6/30/2016)

	Entry	Max Base + Longevity
Fairfax County	\$43,882	\$78,805
Loudoun County	\$35,350	\$76,714
Prince George's County	\$34,219	\$69,352
Prince William County	\$37,045	\$67,891
Montgomery County	\$42,579	\$83,083
Median (excluding Fairfax)	\$36,197	\$73,033
Variance (\$)	\$7,684	\$5,772
Variance (%)	21.2%	7.9%
Rank	1 of 5	2 of 5

The Master Animal Control Officer serves as a lead worker without primary supervisory responsibility and is the rank between journey level Animal Control Officer and Animal Control Officer Sergeant. When comparing Animal Control positions across jurisdictions, PFM matched similar job duties, where appropriate. Prince George's, Prince William, and Montgomery Counties did not report a job match for a Master Animal Control Officer equivalent. For these comparisons, the journey level title was used to match Fairfax County's Master Animal Control Officer.

Animal Control Officer Job Matches

	Fairfax County	Alexandria	Arlington County	District of Columbia	Loudoun County	Prince George's County	Prince William County	Montgomery County
Entry Level ACO	Animal Control Officer I	*	*	*	Animal Control Officer	Animal Control Officer I	Deputy Animal Control Officer	Code Enforcement Inspector I
Journey Level ACO	Animal Control Officer II	*	*	*	Senior Animal Control Officer	Animal Control Officer II	Animal Control Investigator	Code Enforcement Inspector III
Lead ACO	Master Animal Control Officer	*	*	*	Deputy Chief Animal Control Officer	Animal Control Officer III	Animal Control Investigator	Code Enforcement Inspector III

**denotes that animal control services are contracted out to a non-profit organization*

At maximum base + longevity for Master Animal Control Officer, Fairfax County's pay again compares favorably relative to the comparison group – ranking third of five jurisdictions, 3.8% above the survey group median.

Animal Control Officer Comparisons – Lead Level (as of 6/30/2016)

	Max Base + Longevity
Fairfax County	\$82,745
Loudoun County	\$88,802
Prince George's County	\$76,307
Prince William County	\$67,891
Montgomery County	\$83,083
Median (excluding Fairfax)	\$79,695
Variance (\$)	\$3,050
Variance (%)	3.8%
Rank	3 of 5

Fairfax County ACO retirement benefits are also strong relative to other jurisdictions surveyed. Fairfax County ACOs are in the Uniformed System (Plan E), along with firefighters, sheriffs, public safety communication employees, and helicopter pilots. In all other jurisdictions surveyed, ACOs are in the same retirement system as non-uniform employees.

Further, Fairfax County and Prince George's County are the only two jurisdictions where ACOs participate in a defined benefit pension program – ACOs in the remaining jurisdictions have access to either a defined contribution cash-balance retirement plan or a hybrid plan, which combine elements of both defined benefit and defined contribution plans.

Fairfax County is also the only jurisdiction that offers a defined benefit pension with a normal retirement after 25 years of service. The table on the following page summarizes key plan design features and contribution levels of ACO retirement plans.

Regional Animal Control Officer Retirement Benefit Structures

	Retirement System	Plan Type	Employee Contribution	Normal Retirement	Multiplier
Fairfax County (ACO)	Fairfax Retirement System - Uniformed System Plan E	Defined Benefit	7.08% (salary under SSWB) + 8.33% (salary over SSWB)	Age 55 w/6 YOS or 25 YOS at any age	$(2.5\% \times \text{YOS}) \times 1.03$
Loudoun County	Virginia Retirement System Hybrid Retirement Plan	Hybrid	DB: 4.00% DC: 1.00%	DB: 67 (normal SS retirement age) w/5 YOS; or when age + YOS = 90 DC: Fully Vested after 4 YOS	DB: $1.0\% \times \text{AFC} \times \text{YOS}$ DC: Not applicable
Prince George's County	State of MD Reformed Contributory Pension System + County Supplemental Plan	Defined Benefit	8.58% (7.0% State Plan + 1.58% County Supplemental Plan)*	Age + YOS = 90	$1.5\% \times \text{AFC} \times \text{YOS} + 1.0\% \times \text{YOS}$ (Supplemental Plan)
Prince William County	Virginia Retirement System Hybrid Retirement Plan	Hybrid	DB: 4.00% DC: 1.00%	DB: 67 (normal SS retirement age) w/5YOS; or or when age + YOS = 90 DC: Fully Vested after 4 YOS	DB: $1.0\% \times \text{AFC} \times \text{YOS}$ DC: Not applicable
Montgomery County	Montgomery County Employees' Retirement System	Two DC Plans Offered	4.0% (salary under SSWB) 8.0% (salary over SSWB)	Fully Vested after 3 YOS	RSP: Employer contribution of 8%; returns depend on investment performance GRIP: Employer contribution of 8%; guaranteed 7.25% rate of return

Notes: Table reflects most recent pension/retirement plan tier; "AFC" = Average Final Compensation; "SSWB" = Social Security Wage Base. *Prince George's County: employee contribution actuarially determined; table shows contribution rate as of 6/30/2011

Approaches for Organizational Improvement

Academic research, as well as our benchmarking findings, demonstrates that there is no one “on-size-fits-all” solution for structuring an animal services organization. Successful animal services operations can be structured in many forms – as a stand-alone department, a division within a non-law enforcement department, separate groups across two organizations, or contracted out.

One key theme noted in interviews across all types of surveyed jurisdictions, however, is the importance of communication and collaboration between the animal services and animal control functions. Surveyed organizations uniformly reported that they view the missions of these two functions as critically interconnected. At the same time, multiple jurisdictions reported that bridging the common cultural divide existing between animal control and animal shelter represents an ongoing challenge. Fairfax County is not unique in this regard.

Regardless of what structure Fairfax County chooses moving forward – keeping animal control and the animal shelter within the police department, keeping animal control in the police department and allowing the animal shelter to become a stand-alone department, or another approach altogether – improved cooperation between the two animal services function is essential if the County is to maintain and build on the recent advances in the Countywide save rate and other measures of strong performance.

The following represents a list of strategic and tactical approaches to improve the working relationship between animal control and animal shelter staff for the County to consider regardless of which animal services organizational structure is implemented:

- **Achieve Clarity and Respect for Each Function’s Important Mission, Role, and Expertise:** Significant disruption and uncertainty regarding roles and functions, such as recently sparked by the statewide change in the law enforcement authority of Virginia Special Conservators of the Peace, can be a source for confusion and even conflict. As Fairfax County moves forward, it will be important to establish and maintain clear and consistent delineations of the distinct roles for the animal control and animal shelter functions – and for each of these important missions and areas of expertise to be respected.
- **Hold Regular Staff Meetings** – Currently, there are no regularly scheduled meetings between the animal control and animal shelter staff. Fostering dialogue between each functional area represents a first step in bridging the institutional divide between the two functional areas.

As a point of reference, the City of San Antonio holds weekly leadership meetings with Animal Services division leads, monthly supervisor meetings, and quarterly “all hands” meetings with animal services employees. These meetings are structured, but also provide a forum for senior leaders to provide updates on key initiatives, identify areas of tension for resolution, and identify potential areas for collaboration.

The following bullets present an example of one format for structured weekly meetings between senior animal shelter and animal control leaders:

- Check-in (5 mins): Each attendee briefly shares a recent professional development (e.g., current projects, activities, etc.)
- Review Scorecard (10 mins): A spreadsheet summarizing weekly metrics that both animal control and animal shelter senior leaderships agree are important to review on an ongoing basis
- Customer/Employee Headlines (5 mins): Noteworthy developments about staff members, volunteers, or interactions with the public. A way of granting all meeting attendees insight into conversations/feedback/news that that may not have been widely circulated to both animal services and animal shelter personnel
- To-Do List (5 mins): Review the to-do list that was generated at previous meeting to ensure all tasks were accomplished, or if not, to ensure that obstacles/barriers to complete the task are addressed. Holds people accountable, without “pointing fingers” and ensures all assigned tasks are completed in a timely fashion
- Issues/Matters (30 mins): All attendees provided with opportunity to put forth items on the table for discussion, which in turn, are prioritized by the group so that the top three issues are addressed in the meeting. The remainder are tabled for the next meeting or discussed in the interim. Opportunity to identify, discuss, solve, and plan. If any items require longer discussion, plans are made so the group can end the meeting on time and still know work will be done to continue addressing the issue at hand.

As part of regular structured meetings with division leads, each division may develop and share an objective scorecard of key performance indicators. As a performance management tool, scorecards can help division leaders identify operational problems early and implement corrective action early. Sharing of the scorecards between each division will also provide insight into strategic priorities and initiatives, in time, increasing the potential of collaboration between animal control and animal shelter staff.

- **Hold Regular Cross-Function Meetings with the Deputy County Executive** – The Directors of Animal Control and Animal Services should also meet in regular intervals, together, with the Deputy County Executive. These meetings can be scheduled as part of the Deputy County Executive’s regular oversight duties (e.g., quarterly or semi-

annually). Holding these meetings jointly will underscore the shared mission of both functions, highlight the importance of both functions working collaboratively, and provide a forum for County executive management to hold each side accountable for working together.

- **Encourage Discourse through Formal Channels and Create Dispute Resolution Processes** – ACOs should be granted an avenue to articulate their concerns, and provide input, in the determining whether a “high risk” animal should be euthanized. ACO’s offer insightful and valuable information in these cases. However, the ultimate responsibility for euthanizing an animal resides with the individual who is responsible for overseeing the animal shelter – since she/he has the most information regarding an animal’s disposition. ACOs should articulate opinions regarding whether an animal should be euthanized within these formal channels – i.e., the internal chain of command, newly instituted regular meetings, and/or a newly instituted formal dispute resolution process.

Respondents from the survey jurisdictions often reported that they had created such formal dispute resolution processes to address differences of opinion when they emerge around how to handle “high risk” animals. Often, the Animal Services Director is presented with information from animal control and animal shelter staff when determining whether to euthanize an animal. Presentation of these cases could be part of regularly scheduled meetings between senior animal control and animal shelter staff, or ad-hoc meetings can be organized on an as-needed basis. Ultimately, the decision on whether or not an animal should be euthanized should reside with a Director of Animal Services. Should the County decide to separate the Animal Shelter into a stand-alone department, the Director of the Animal Shelter should make the final recommendation of whether or not an animal in the shelter should be euthanized. Yet, regardless of which organizational structure is determined to be the best fit for Fairfax County, there should be a transparent process for collecting and reviewing all relevant information – including input from ACOs – when making this decision.

- **Improve Sharing of Data/Information:** Currently, animal control and the animal shelter use two different data systems to track animals in the field and in the shelter. If migrating to the same data system is not possible, every effort should be made so that the Animal Shelter has the relevant field reports from ACOs. The timely sharing of documented information from ACOs will not only improve management of animal cases, but potentially reduce misunderstandings and miscommunication between animal control and animal shelter staff around the disposition and actions of animals who enter the Shelter.
- **Consider Contracting with or Hiring an Animal Behaviorist:** Because of the potential tension involved in determining whether an animal should be euthanized, Denver and San Antonio use animal behaviorists to independently assess dogs that are brought into the Animal Shelter. The behaviorist uses a standardized and objective set of

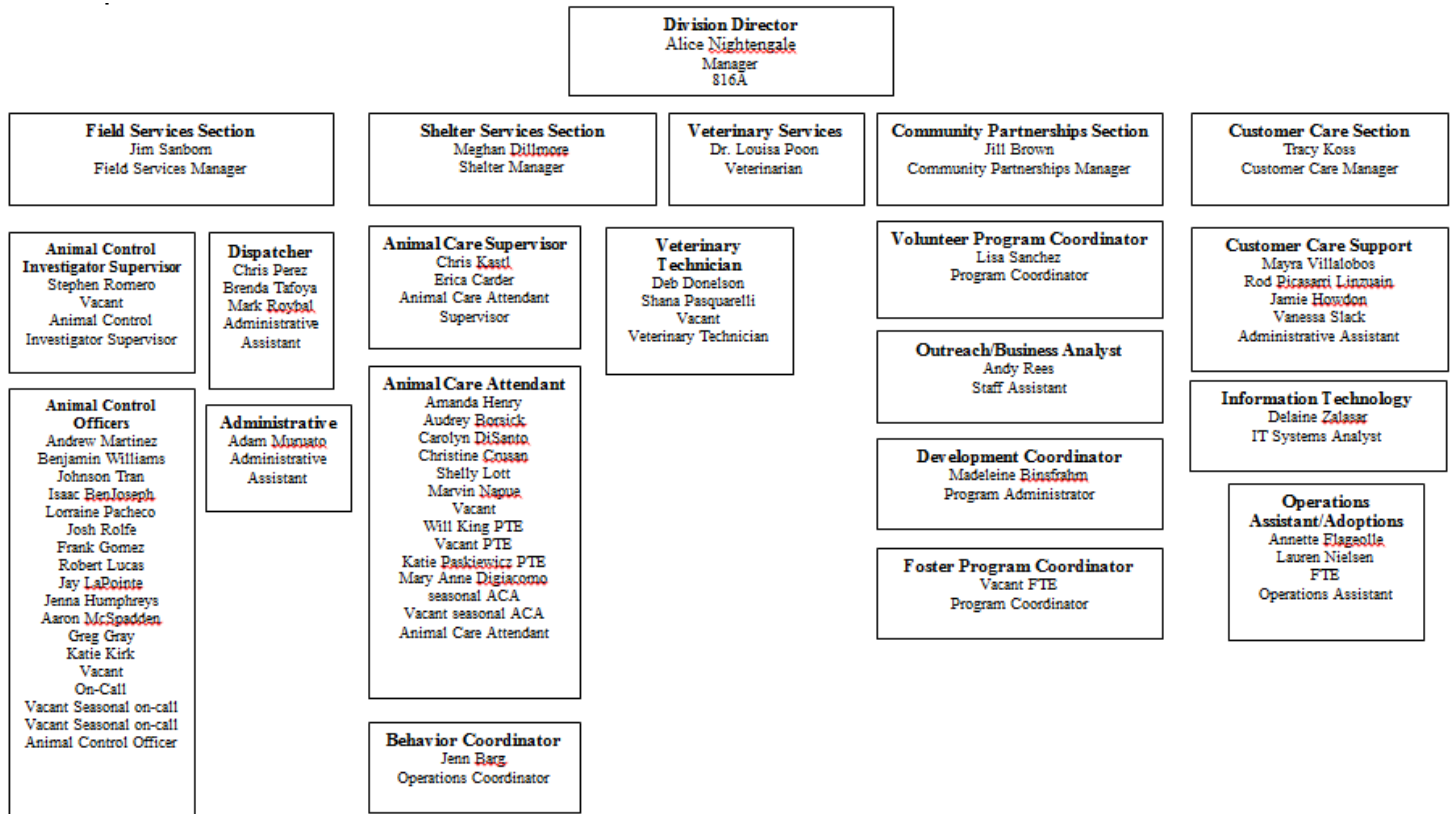
criteria, including notes from the Animal Control Officer – again, underscoring the need for timely sharing of information – to assess the animal's disposition and make recommendations about euthanasia, when needed.

- **Explore Opportunities for Cross-Training:** Denver has implemented standard operating procedures for animal control and animal shelter staff so that each side of the organization develops a better understanding of the other's duties and responsibilities. Animal shelter staff are encouraged to join animal control staff in ride-a-longs, so that animal shelter personnel can see first-hand some of the challenges and difficulties that ACOs experience in the field. Similarly, ACOs must rotate through and participate in periodic animal euthanasias. Denver reports that having ACOs participate in the euthanasia process, when necessary, helps to instill an appreciation for the gravity involved, and results in more civil and thoughtful discussions between animal control and animal shelter staff about the decision to euthanize "high risk" animals.

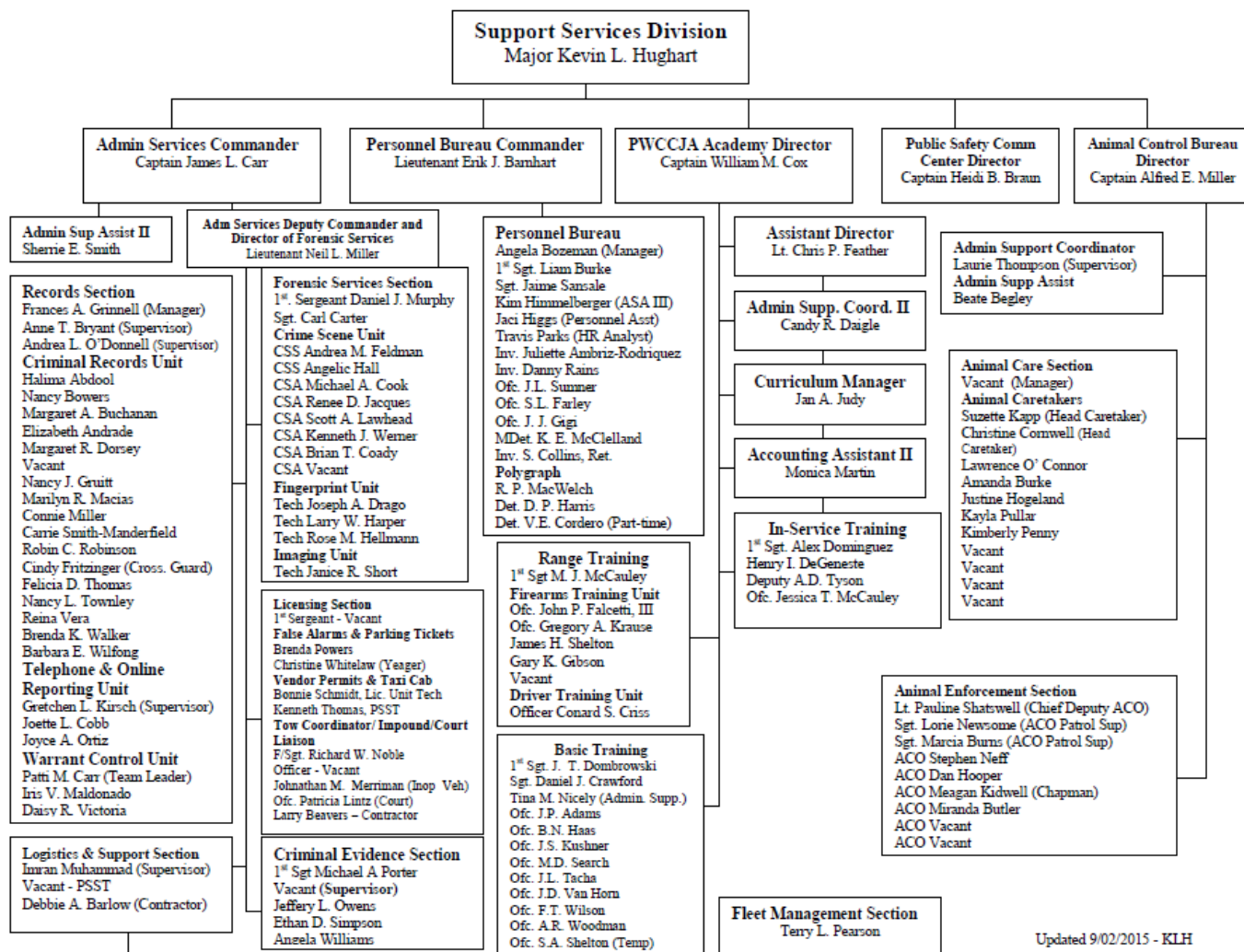
The above list is not intended to be exhaustive, and Fairfax County will likely need to use a mix of approaches – refined over time – to ensure strong coordination and collaboration going forward. Again, however, all jurisdictions surveyed report that encouraging cross-functional communication and developing an organizational culture of cooperation and collaboration is a critical driver for success in service delivery.

Appendix

Denver Animal Protection Organization Chart

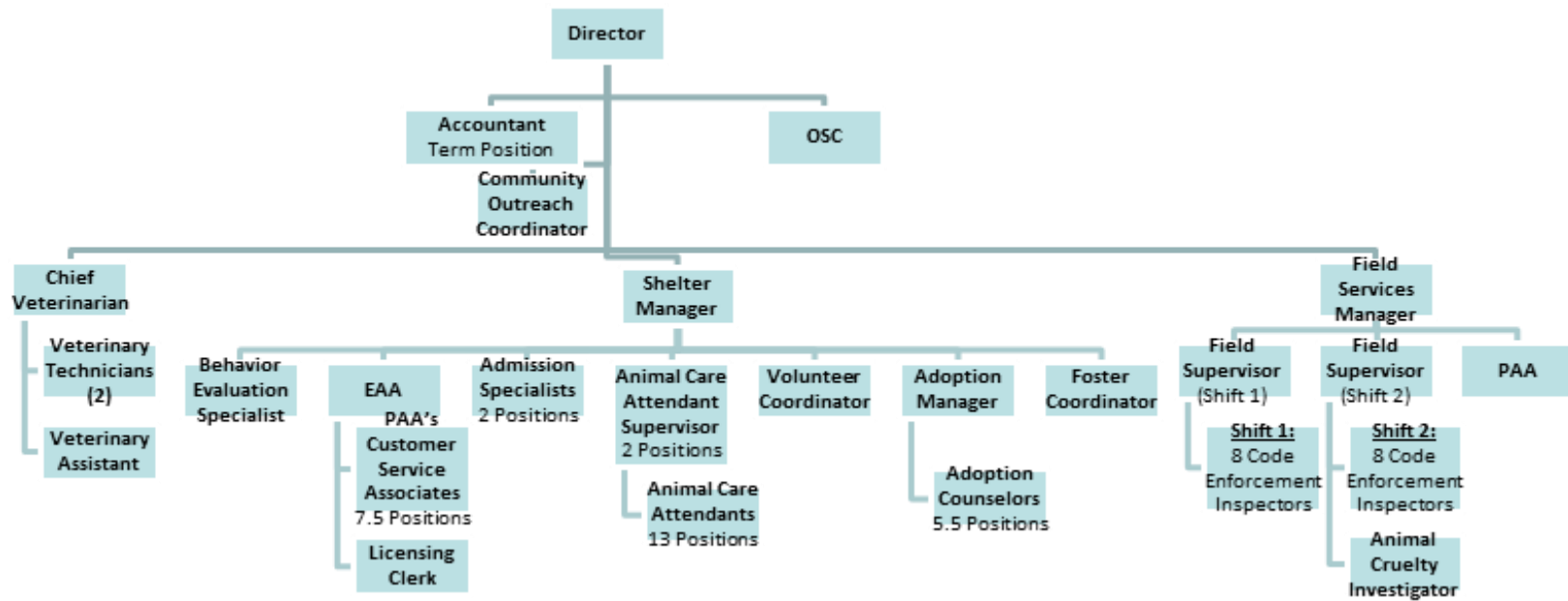


Prince William County, Support Service Division (Police Department) Organization Chart



Updated 9/02/2015 - KLH

Montgomery County, Animal Services Division (Police Department) – Organization Chart



San Antonio Animal Care Services Organizational Chart



ANIMAL CARE SERVICES ORGANIZATIONAL CHART - September 24, 2015 -

Total FTE: 130
Total Volunteers: 14

